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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

October 23, 2009

COMMITTEES:
VETERANS' AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH
CHAIRMAN
TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT
SUBCOMMITTEE ON RAILROAD, PIPELINES
AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
SMALL BUSINESS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON RURAL AND URBAN
ENTERPRENEURSHIP
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND TAX

Chairman James Oberstar
House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Oberstar:

I wanted to take this opportunity to share a letter of support for Section 194 of the Senate Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2010. As you know, Section 194 would authorize a one-year pilot project that gives the State of Maine the ability to allow increased truck weights on their Interstate highways. Any vehicle participating in the pilot would be required to add a sixth axle for additional safety and infrastructure protection. Additionally, the provision requires that the Secretary of Transportation and the Maine Department of Transportation study the impact of the one-year pilot project on safety, road and bridge durability, commerce and energy use.

While this pilot program is a step in the right direction, I still firmly believe that a permanent solution for Maine and the rest of the country must be put into place. As the Surface Transportation Authorization Act of 2009 moves forward, I look forward to continuing our work on this important issue.

With warmest regards,

Michael H. Michaud
Member of Congress

Enclosure: Letter to Chairman Obey, Ranking Member Lewis, Chairman Olver and Ranking Member Latham

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ENTREPRENEURSHIP
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND TAX

Chairman David R. Obey
House Committee on Appropriations
H-218, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Jerry Lewis
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman John W. Olver
House Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing, Urban Development and Related Agencies
2358-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Tom Latham
House Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing, Urban Development and Related Agencies
2358-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey, Ranking Member Lewis, Chairman Olver and Ranking Member Latham:

Thank you for your work on the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2010. As you work to reconcile different versions of the legislation from the House and the Senate, I hope that you will support a pilot project in the Senate legislation that would increase the safety and efficiency of Maine's highways.

As you know, Section 194 would authorize a one-year pilot project that gives the State of Maine the ability to allow increased truck weights on their Interstate highways. Any vehicle participating in the pilot would be required to add a sixth axle for additional safety and infrastructure protection. Additionally, the provision requires that the Secretary of Transportation and the Maine Department of Transportation study the impact of the one-year pilot project on safety, road and bridge durability, commerce and energy use.

Throughout my career, I have worked hard to support a permanent, fact-based solution to our nation's outdated truck weight regulations. Our country's aging transportation infrastructure is in desperate need of new investment. The rise and fall of fuel prices takes a heavy toll on businesses throughout the United States. Freight tonnage is expected to double over the next twenty years, intensifying problems with congestion. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, an increase in truck weight limits would result in reduced pavement maintenance costs. A study by the American Transportation Research Institute found that at a 97,000 pound truck is 17 percent more fuel-efficient on a ton-mile basis than a truck with a gross weight of 80,000 pounds. An increase in efficiency would create a decrease in vehicle-miles traveled, reducing congestion on our roads.

Most importantly, Section 194 will take important and necessary steps to improve the safety of Maine citizens. Under current law, large trucks traveling to Canada are forced off of the last 200 miles of Interstate-95 and onto rural state roads. This pilot project would move these vehicles back onto the Interstate System and out of small communities throughout Maine. Studies by the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Transportation Research Board indicate nearly the exact same safety statistics when comparing a six-axle truck to an 80,000 pound truck with five-axles. Maneuverability, rollover and vehicle handling data from these studies have clearly proven that adding two additional brakes with the sixth axle creates a vehicle that can safely traverse our nation's Interstate highways. The fact that the vast majority of truck-related accidents occur on non-Interstate highways illustrates why it is so important to have our heaviest trucks move away from small rural roads and onto the Interstate where they belong.

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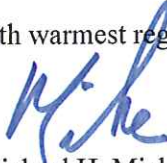
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I hope that you will support the inclusion of this important pilot project in the final version of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2010. Thank you for your consideration.

With warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike", is positioned above the printed name.

Michael H. Michaud
Member of Congress